

BARLEY HARVEST
by Willis E. Bishop

Taken from Study in the Book of Ruth

The month of barley harvest. Turn to Leviticus 23 beginning with verse 4: These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at evening is the Lord's passover. [The fourteenth day of the first month is passover.]

Verse 6: And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord. Seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. The first day ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days. In the seventh day is an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work therein.

The fourteenth day of the month is the evening of passover. The fifteenth day of the month is the feast of unleavened bread.

Verse 9: And the Lord spoke unto Moses saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, 'When ye are come into the land which I give unto you and shall reap the harvest thereof, ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits [that would be barley] of your harvest unto the priest. And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you. On the next day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.'"

Notice, there is passover, then an intervening day, and then the sheaf of firstfruits offered before the Lord the day after the sabbath day. Passover, the intervening day, and the day of the firstfruits.

Put into the pattern of Christ (and that wasn't particularly my point) - Christ being crucified on Friday, Saturday intervened, and Sunday the day of firstfruits, Christ arose from the dead as the firstfruit from the dead.

What I want to point out is that when you have this sheaf in verse 10 that would be waved in verse 11, what is not told us in Scripture but what Jewish records indicate was that on the fourteenth day of the month, that is, on the passover between the evenings, the priests went out across the Kidron valley to a field of barley. There they would cut the first sheaf of firstfruits. That was on the eve of the passover. That sheaf was kept until the day after the sabbath and then waved before the Lord.

Edersheim, the Jewish Christian commentator, points out that he believes this particular activity at the time that Christ was crucified made it possible without objection for Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimethea to claim the body of our Lord. Because, in verse 5 [in Leviticus 23], "in the fourteenth day of the first month at evening,"

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the Hebrew says "between the evenings," what happened was Christ died on the cross between those evenings. It was at that point that the priests had to go across the Kidron valley and reap this sheaf of firstfruits so they might have it for the day after the sabbath to be waved before the Lord. So the priests disappeared from the crucifixion scene. It was then that Christ had dismissed His spirit and Joseph of Arimethea and Nicodemus came to claim the body of Christ without any objection from the priests.

It seems to me that is a very valid suggestion, with the Jewish background of the barley harvest sheaf of firstfruits.

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